



Rev. Rothang Chhangte To Receive Luke Mowbray Ecumenical Award

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 2/22/13)—Rothang Chhangte, director of Baptist World Aid (BWAid), the relief and development arm of the Baptist World Alliance, is the 2013 recipient of the Luke Mowbray Ecumenical Award. Chhangte is also former liaison for Refugees from Burma with American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS), the domestic mission arm of American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA).

Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley, general secretary of ABCUSA, said, “Rothang is an outstanding choice. With her rich Baptist heritage, she has been a wonderful representative of our denomination and the believer's church tradition in ecumenical circles. Her contributions to the *Decade to Overcome Violence* made it a powerful witness for peace. Likewise, she was an advocate in the World Council of Churches for the situation in Burma which resulted in a visit to the Mae La Refugee camp in Thailand, followed by a visit to Burma, by a group of religious leaders, who went to encourage the churches there. Her formidable gifts in ministry are serving the worldwide Baptist community as she serves as the Director of Baptist World Aid.”

The award will be presented at the Christian Unity Dinner on Friday, June 21, 2013 during the American Baptist Mission Summit/Biennial in Overland Park, Kansas. Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed, National Director, Office for Interfaith & Community Alliances, Islamic Society of North America, will be the guest speaker for the dinner. Dr. Syeed was on the planning committee for the Baptist-Muslim Dialogue, serving alongside Roy Medley, ABCUSA general secretary, in 2009 and 2012.

The Luke Mowbray Ecumenical Award was established in 1975 at the request of Edna Mowbray, in memory of her late husband to recognize their commitment to achieve Christian unity. Its purpose is to give recognition to a member of an American Baptist church who has made an outstanding contribution in ecumenical work at the local, state, national or international level as either a volunteer or paid professional. The Mowbrays were faithful members of First Baptist Church in Pratt, Kansas.

Chhangte has served American Baptists in her role as ecumenical officer, and then on staff with ABHMS for concerns related to the Burmese Refugee community. In her role as ecumenical officer, she represented ABCUSA on the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC), Baptist World Alliance (BWA), Christian Churches Together (CCT), and the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC).

- As a representative to the WCC, she was instrumental in the implementation of the *Decade to Overcome Violence* (DOV) in the United States. She was very involved in reviving and supporting youth and young adult participation in WCC events in the U.S.
- Chhangte now serves as the Director of Baptist World Aid, which distributes hundreds of thousands of dollars in relief and development aid around the world.
- She was a member of the Steering Committee that led to the formation of CCT as an expanded ecumenical table and which led ABCUSA to become a founding member.
- She served on the Executive Committee of the NCCC, where she made significant contributions to the functioning of the Council and its emphasis upon justice.

A proud American Baptist, Chhangte has been a voice for the Baptist/Believers church tradition in these ecumenical settings and as a spokesperson for ABCUSA, representing the best of our American Baptist tradition.

She served on the BWA General Council from 2001-2007 and has attended a number Baptist World Congresses and several Baptist Youth World Conferences. She was pastor of the Woodland Baptist Church from 1994-2000 and, prior to that, was assistant pastor of Chestnut Street Baptist Church, both in Philadelphia in the state of Pennsylvania.

Chhangte has worked with a number of church-affiliated organizations. She was, at various times, program analysis coordinator with Church World Service; director of ecumenical formation at American Baptist Churches USA; executive director of the Asian American Youth Association; and administrator at the Oxford Conference on Christian Faith and Economics.

Since 2006, she has been a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and was a member of the Executive Committee and Governing Board of the National Council of Churches USA from 2001-2007, co-chairing its Interfaith Commission between 2004 and 2007.

She holds a Master of Divinity degree from Palmer Theological Seminary and an MBA degree from Eastern University, two Baptist-affiliated schools near Philadelphia. She was also a business major in her Bachelor's degree program at another Baptist school, Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota. In addition, she holds diplomas from the Oxford Graduate Summer School of Theology in the United Kingdom and the Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies in Switzerland.

She received a Human Rights Award from the Human Relations Commission of the City of Philadelphia in 1998, and a Community Service Award from the Association of Asian American Educators in 1996.

American Baptist Churches is one of the most diverse Christian denominations today, with over 5,200 local congregations comprised of 1.3 million members, across the United States and Puerto Rico, all engaged in God's mission around the world.